

ARTICLE APPEARED  
ON PAGE 5

8 May 1985

# US-Polish ties are strained, but not broken

By George D. Moffett III  
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

Washington

Two recent events have put US-Polish relations on the front burner following a gradual period of reconciliation.

Last week, two US Embassy officials were detained and later deported for allegedly participating in May Day demonstrations in the southern Polish city of Krakow on behalf of the outlawed Solidarity trade movement.

Last February, a US diplomat was expelled from Poland after being accused by Polish authorities of spying.

In both cases, Polish charges were denied by the US State Department. In retaliation for the May Day events, the department last week ordered four Polish officials deported from the US.

Both incidents — described by one department official as "extraneous and unnecessary" — hint at fundamental, long-term strains in US-Polish relations.

Government and private experts say such strains in US-Polish relations may have more to do with Poland's domestic affairs than with its relations with this country.

Despite the lifting of martial law, dissatisfaction with political repression and economic shortages is still widespread in Poland, says Sophia Miskiewicz, a Poland specialist at the Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. "Nothing's basically changed since the days of strikes and dissident activity in 1981," says Ms. Miskiewicz.

"The government hopes the people will forget," says Miskiewicz.

"The problem is that the US is consistent in remembering the way the Polish people have been treated, and this is what rankles. Taking action against US officials is one way for the Polish government to express its dissatisfaction. It's a way of establishing that Poland is not going to be pushed around by a superpower," she says.

Miskiewicz and others note that since Poland has already been denied loan credits and most-favored-nation trading status with the US there is little more the US is likely to do to express its disfavor with the slow progress of human rights in Poland.

Given the US concern with human rights in Poland, and the reluctance of the Polish government to grant them, US-Polish relations are likely to remain strained for the foreseeable future.

"In effect, the situation puts US-Polish relations on hold," says a US official.

Relations with Poland reached a nadir in December 1981, when Poland's leader Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski declared martial law, broke up the Solidarity trade union, ordered the detention of thousands of government opponents, and sent tanks through the streets of Warsaw and other Polish cities.

In response, the Reagan administration imposed a series of stringent sanctions on Poland, including the withdrawal of most-favored-nation trading status, the suspension of commercial flights, and a ban on scientific, cultural, and educational exchanges.

In addition, the administration objected to Poland's entry into the International Monetary Fund (IMF), depriving Poland access to loans to help ease the burden of its huge foreign debt.

Since the events of 1981, relations between the US and

Poland have improved by incremental steps. In 1983, the Polish government lifted martial law. A year later, it declared amnesty for political detainees and announced plans for parliamentary elections to be held later this year. The Reagan administration, in turn, lifted some of the 1981 sanctions, culminating in a decision last December to retract its objections to Polish membership in the IMF.

Although relations between the two countries were not broken during the 1981 crisis, neither country is currently represented by an ambassador.